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[a1545]

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General Managers.
Hongkong, 14th August, 1903. [a3389]

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Hongkong, 22nd April, 1904. [1074]

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Hongkong, 22nd March, 1904. [a18]

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Hongkong, 13th April, 1904. [a91]

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all Sizes, Nos. 10 to 88SG. AIR GUNS and
AMMUNITION in Variety.
WM. SCHMIDT & CO.,
Hongkong, 28th November, 1902. [130]

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[a486]

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This new preparation will be found to combine the aromatic properties of the
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DELICATELY PERFUMED with the sweet odour of MITCHAM LAVEN-
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Hongkong, 21st December, 1903. [a38]

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G. GIRAULT. [a49]

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You pay a small sum down—say \$10.
Then \$5 every succeeding month.
And before you know where you are
The SINGER belongs to you.

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Hongkong, 22nd April, 1904. [1016]

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CALL FLAG E.

REPAIR WORK to Steamers and
R. Launches. Castings in Brass and Iron
Moder. charges. Work solicited.
J. D. EDWARDS,
Manager.
Amoy, 3rd December, 1903. [a78]

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PLATED, GLASS AND CROCKERY
WARE, &c., &c., and FOOCHOW
LACQUERED WARE.
68, QUEEN'S ROAD CENTRAL.
Hongkong, 21st September, 1903. [a31]

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GRANITE MERCHANT CONTRACTORS.
Dealers in
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MONUMENTS
No. 1, QUEEN'S ROAD EAST.
Estimates, Designs & Prices on Application.
All descriptions of Granite for Export.
Hongkong, 17th October, 1902. [10]

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Bath to each room.

Dining-room and Cuisine under strict
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European and American Wines, Spirits, and
Beers.
POOL and BILLIARDS.
English, American and Manila Newspapers on
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Terms: \$4 to \$10.00 per day.
R. MATTHEW,
Proprietor.
Hongkong, 6th May, 1903. [a218]

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[a914]

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Electrically Lighted. Electric Fans (if
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Hongkong, 10th June 1903. [a1092]

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Large and lofty Rooms, Elegantly Furnished.
Hydraulic Elevator, hot and cold water
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Special Rates for Tourists.
Lunch Service for Guests.
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Hongkong, 31st October, 1902. [a49]

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(HOTEL-SANITARIUM OF SOUTH
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MACAO

HAS been re-opened under European
management and most strict supervision
as to food, cleanliness, and hygiene of the place.
All comforts of a home.
A most pleasant retreat for those desirous of
a few days rest and quiet.
Comfortable accommodation for travellers
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colony of Macao.

Macao is 40 miles south-west of Hongkong.
One steamer (s.s. Heungshan), daily to and
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Canton, give easy communication with both
these centres.
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For Terms, apply to
THE MANAGER.
[a254]

MACAO

AND

CANTON

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A LITTLE CHANGE.

THE Round Trip from HONGKONG
to MACAO, thence to CANTON and back to
Hongkong, will be found interesting and
enjoyable.

WM. FARMER,

Proprietor.

[a607-1977]

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B. ST. ESTEPHE (Red Capsule) ...	\$8.00	\$9.00
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THE HONGKONG DISPENSARY.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

On the 16th April, at Hankow, SEIGMUND ROSENBAUM.

The Daily Press.

HONGKONG OFFICE: 14, DES VOUX ROAD CL.
LONDON OFFICE: 131, FLEET STREET, E.C.

HONGKONG, 27TH APRIL, 1904

SINCE Mr. CHAMBERLAIN in August last wrote to the Hongkong Government his despatch with reference to the resolution on the currency question passed by the members of the local Chamber of Commerce at a special general meeting on the previous 18th February, public discussion on the subject has practically ceased. It has been felt that it is useless to go on talking when the home authorities have declared their belief in the inexpediency of further discussion at the present stage on the possibility of a gold standard in Hongkong and have pronounced that it is "out of the question" to consider Hongkong apart from China in the matter. There has appeared no way of getting round the position taken up by Downing Street. But we are glad to see, nevertheless, that the Hongkong Chamber of Commerce has not dropped the question. In the report to be presented at the annual meeting this afternoon, it will be seen, the subject is dealt with. The report remarks that it is no doubt too early to expect that any material result has been attained, up to the time of writing, in the direction of furthering the cause of currency reform with the Chinese Government. But joint efforts of the Hongkong, Shanghai, and Tientsin Chambers cannot be entirely in vain. As is shown by the report, and still more fully in Appendix H to the report, it was the Tientsin Chamber which made the first advance, writing to Hongkong on the 25th of last May, stating that it was considering the drafting of a memorial to the Diplomatic Body at Peking on the subject of instability of exchange and its disastrous

effects on China's trade. The Tientsin Committee had good reason for believing that the Chinese Government was taking action, and therefore suggested that the two southern Chambers should join the Tientsin Chamber in a memorial. The Hongkong Committee, however, seeing the difficulty of the proposed memorial, which would probably necessitate the Committees discussing the terms very fully, advised as a first step the establishment by China of a uniform national currency, as was provided for by Article XI. of the 1902 (Mackay) commercial treaty. The next step was taken by the Shanghai Chamber's Committee, which sent to Hongkong on the 25th June, a proposed draft memorial, the scope of which the Hongkong Committee was glad to find had been confined to emphasising the need of a national coinage for China. Tientsin, on the 15th July, wrote expressing agreement with the Hongkong and Shanghai views, with one slight amendment providing for the closing of the provincial mints. Hongkong, however, urged the substitution of "absorption" for "closing" and carried the point. The memorial accordingly was altered and on the 6th August was forwarded to H. E. Mr. E. H. CONGER, *doyen* of the Diplomatic Body at Peking. This document ran as follows:—

"We, the undersigned Chambers of Commerce of Shanghai, Hongkong, and Tientsin, respectfully beg to bring to your notice the serious disabilities under which this Country labours by reason of the violent fluctuations in the gold value of silver, and the pressing need thereby occasioned for the prompt introduction of remedial measures.

"In approaching this subject we are fully aware of the difficulties with which it is surrounded, but while in no way seeking to minimise these difficulties we venture to think that if the Treaty Powers show their desire to render to China their sympathetic assistance, she may be encouraged to take the initiative in endeavouring to extricate the country from the financial confusion into which it has drifted and to avert the ruin which further inaction seems to threaten.

"Under Clause II. of the Treaty recently concluded with Great Britain, China agrees to take the necessary steps to provide for a uniform National coinage, and it is in the fulfilment of this clause of the treaty (which to be effective must include the absorption of the provincial mints) that we recognise the preliminary step to the much needed reforms.

"It is hardly necessary to point out how essential it is to the Powers carrying on trade with China—and no less to China herself—that this question of a uniform coinage, as a preliminary step to the establishment of a currency on a gold basis, be taken in hand at once, nor, on the other hand, to demonstrate the dangers attendant on delay. It is only too well known by traders that the constant fluctuation of silver, converting as it may, a profitable contract into an ultimate loss, engenders a feeling of insecurity in all commercial transactions which cannot fail to hinder the expansion of trade.

"Moved by these considerations and feeling confident that whatever measures may subsequently be found to be desirable or feasible, the first step is the establishment of a national coinage, as provided for by treaty, we respectfully beg that the representatives of the treaty powers in Peking lose no opportunity of urging upon the Chinese Government the imperative necessity of taking this matter in hand without delay."

A short letter of acknowledgment was received from Peking, the Diplomatic Body expressing itself as "highly interested" and "greatly appreciating the efforts and zeal" of the three Chambers. And there, as far as we know, the matter rests. But it is impossible that the memorial can fail to hasten in some degree that promised reform of China's currency to which we in Hongkong are forced by those who govern us to look for our own future relief from the difficulties of an ever-fluctuating exchange.

We are asked to remind members of the Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce of the Annual Meeting at the City Hall at 3.30 p.m. to day.

The Japanese Government states that the Asama found a Russian mine floating forty miles from Shantung Promontory. There are probably many more adrift. Neutral ships are cautioned.

The Hon. Treasurer of the Alice Memorial and Netherdale Hospitals begs to acknowledge with thanks the following donation to the funds of the Hospitals:—Sheung Wan Market Pork Guild, \$135.

The meeting of the Legislative Council yesterday must have been about the shortest on record. Five minutes served to clear off all the business; and the Finance Committee meeting held afterwards was over in another five.

According to a statement made in the Bankruptcy Court the last Indian tour of John Roberts, the famous billiard player, has not been successful. At Madras on one occasion he and his wife were stranded without means. Roberts had received his discharge in bankruptcy subject to a judgment for £1,600 being entered up, and he had paid £300 since 1900.

Prince Adalbert of Prussia is to visit Peking on the 5th prox.

Yi Chi-yong, the Korean Special Envoy to Japan, arrived at Tokyo on the 22nd instant.

A decree has been issued creating an agency of the Banque de l'Indo-Chine at Singapore.

An organ recital will be given in St. John's Cathedral on Friday next at 5 p.m. by Mr. A. G. Ward. The vocalist will be Mr. G. H. Edwards.

A general meeting of subscribers to the Hongkong Nursing Institute will be held in the City Hall at noon to-day to discuss the advisability of building a home for the nurses.

A letter written at Seoul by our special correspondent in the War will be found on p. 5 to-day; and the annual report of the Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce will be found on p. 9.

H.E. Yuan Shi-kai has now under his command in the North a total force of 36,100 men, of all arms, consisting of 25,000 Infantry, 3,750 Cavalry, 3,850 Artillerymen, 1,000 Pioneers, and 500 Transport Corps.

At an entertainment at the Country Club, Shanghai, last week Mr. C. H. P. Hay, formerly so prominent in our local A. D. C. performances, played the part of the "Learned Judge" in *Trial by Jury*.

The U.S. battleship *Kearsarge* has scored six hits out of seven shots fired in 720 seconds, from her 13in guns. The distance was 1,600 yards, and the dimensions of the target were 17ft. by 21ft.

The *P. & T. Times* says that a German lawyer has been retained by the Board of Punishments to draw up the new code of Penal Laws for the Chinese. He is expected to arrive in Peking shortly.

Mr. J. F. Olesen has arrived in Macao, to which he journeyed on Monday on the *Huang-shan* from Hongkong, to take up the duties of Commissioner of Customs, vice Mr. R. B. Moorhead, who has gone home on leave.

The *Straits Echo* has on article on "The Penang Post Office. Is it a Public Scandal?" to which it answers. Yes. Our contemporary contrasts the very different way in which postal affairs are conducted in Hongkong and Shanghai.

Six more plague cases were reported during the day ended at noon yesterday. Five were Chinese and fatal, three being in Kowloon City, and two in First Street. The remaining case was that of an Indian at a police-station in No. 12 Health District.

Field-Marshal Marquis Yamagata is about seventy years old. Field-Marshal Count Oyama is sixty-one. General Nozu is also sixty-one. General Kuroki is fifty-nine. Lieutenant-General Baron Kodama is just over fifty. Baron Oku is three or four years younger. In Japan, it seems, it is not the striplings only who go to war, says the *N. C. Daily News*.

In Chicago Justice John R. McDonnell twice fined, President Arthur Hirsch of the Independent Steel Company for contempt of court. Continuing obstreperous Judge McDonnell left the witness stand and gave the litigant a terrible smash in the eye, following it with a left-handed "hook" under the chin, which lifted President Hirsch into the jury-box. Then, returning to the bench, he said, "Call the next case." This is forceful justice, indeed!

Apocryph of the visit of the Pope's delegate to Macao, the story is going the rounds that one of his reverence's suite who had some favours due to him by a mercantile marine officer en route, repaid these by a promise of his blessings. "Don't forget," said the graceless M. M. man, "that my number in the Macao lottery is 15—". It is said the reverend padre enjoyed the joke as well as the perpetrator.

Imperial Decrees have been issued from Peking, in response to the memorials of H. E. Viceroy Shun, commanding that two Major-Generals of Kwansi Province be cashiered and dismissed from service for ever, an Expectant Taotai of the same be cashiered, and a sub-prefect to be cashiered and banished to the military post roads; and that a large number of civil and military officials of Kwangtung be cashiered and banished, or cashiered and retired.

From Shanghai we have received the first number of a fortnightly Jewish paper devoted to the interests of Jews and Judaism in the East. The title given to the paper is *Israel's Messenger*. Among the contents there is a note remarking that the Jewish community in Hongkong has not yet followed the example of their brethren in the faith at Shanghai by forming a Zionist Association, though it is understood that most of the Jewish residents of the Colony approve of the movement. The Association in Shanghai has a membership of nearly 80.

The following can hardly be classed as "war news." It is a telegram from the *Novi Krai*, appropriately dated Liaoyang, 1st April.—"The first encounter of the troops in Corea was a brilliant victory for the Russian arms. The Japanese lost ten times as many men as we did. According to the Koreans, the Japanese buried fifty dead. Five hundred Koreans were engaged to carry 120 wounded. The confusion was so great that the Japanese waved two red cross flags as a signal for mercy. The total losses of the Japanese from the commencement of hostilities to the middle of February are two ironclads damaged, one cruiser sunk, eleven destroyers sunk, and in addition, one cruiser damaged at the battle of Chemulpo."

TELEGRAMS.

REUTER'S SERVICE.

RUSSIA.—INTERNAL TROUBLES.

LONDON, 24th April.

A plot has been discovered to secure the independence of Poland.

An attempt to blow up two new Russian cruisers arming in the Neva, by means of explosives floating down the river, has been discovered.

THE STRIKE IN HUNGARY.

LONDON, 24th April.

The Hungarian railway strikers have expressed their willingness to accept the terms of the Government and return to work.

FRANCE AND ITALY.

LONDON, 24th April.

President Loubet has arrived at Rome. He was met by the King at the station and preceded to the Quirinal. The ovations from an enormous crowd were most enthusiastic and most cordial. The whole city was gaily decorated and the scene was unsurpassed in brilliancy and magnificence. The French and Italian Press emphasises the importance of the *rapprochement*.

NAVAL NOTES.

U.S.S. "MONTEREY."

The U. S. monitor *Monterey* arrived from Canton yesterday morning, having left that port the previous evening.

THE "VASCO DA GAMA."

The Portuguese battleship *Vasco da Gama* has completed her scrapping, and left the Kowloon Docks. She is now moored at the foreign man-of-war anchorage.

H.M.S. "IPHIGENIA."

H.M. cruiser *Iphegenia* was commissioned at Portsmouth on April 14 to relieve the *Talbot* on the China Station.

FOOCHOW ARSENAL.

The French naval constructor, M. Haet, who has been in charge of the work of building the battleship *Republique*, has been appointed by the Chinese authorities to direct the building of warships at Foochow.

AN UNLUCKY WARSHIP.

The battleship *Missouri*, on which a gun explosion killed over thirty officers and seamen a few days ago, is an unlucky ship, or, to use an American expression, seems to be "hoodooed." A few weeks ago while going from Guantanamo, Cuba, Pensacola, she lost control of her steering gear and collided with the *Illinois*, injuring that vessel.

THE SEOUL FIRE.

The *China Times* publishes the following telegrams:—

Seoul, 15th April.

The Palace has been burnt down to the ground. The fire began at 10 o'clock last night in the servants' quarters and ran like a wave from building to building through the many acres of the palace buildings. The private apartments of the Royal family, the State apartments, the electric light works and everything are all gone. The Korean officials, in terror, refused to admit the Japanese fire brigades. Consequently, as the Koreans themselves were helpless, no attempt whatever was made to check the fire, except that parties of British and French marines entered the enclosures, in the rear of the palace buildings, and by splendid and persevering work prevented the spread of the flames to the British Legation and other buildings. The Japanese troops outside the palace were very active. Going round the whole city at the double trot they occupied every point and effectively prevented any outbreak of disorder. The Emperor escaped to the library in a detached building and waited there till the fire burnt itself out.

Seoul, 16th April.

Inevitable insinuations that the fire was the result of incendiarism proved unfounded. The Emperor declares that he personally saw the woodwork ignite owing to a defective flue. The total damage is estimated at 5,000,000 yen. The archives and the contents of the Treasury are intact, as these were kept underground. It will be necessary for the Emperor to rebuild a residence and reside on the same spot for three years, in order to complete the regulations for the Imperial mourning for the late Empress Dowager, but his Majesty will then remove to the Eastern Palace, nearer to the Japanese Legation.

ROYAL HONGKONG GOLF CLUB.

The following cards were returned at the quarterly meeting held at Happy Valley from the 23rd to the 25th April, 1904:—

MCWEEN CUP.	
Mr. A. Brodie Smith ...	81 — 11 = 80
Dr. Martin, R.N. ...	87 — 6 = 81
Mr. C. M. G. Burns ...	83 — 1 = 82
Mr. E. V. D. Parr ...	92 — 10 = 82
Mr. G. A. Parker, R.N. ...	90 — 6 = 84
Mr. J. Rodgers ...	96 — 12 = 84
Mr. T. C. Gray ...	100 — 16 = 84
Mr. E. J. Grist ...	88 — 3 = 85
Mr. C. H. Grace ...	99 — 14 = 85
Mr. W. Taylor ...	103 — 18 = 85

BOGEY AND MARTIN CUP.	
Mr. E. J. Grist, receives 2 strokes ...	all square
Dr. Gibson, rec. 8 strokes ...	"
Mr. E. V. D. Parr, rec. 8 strokes, one down	"
Mr. A. Brooks Smith, rec. 8 strokes ...	"
Mr. T. C. Gray, rec. 12 strokes ...	"
Mr. J. Rodgers, rec. 8 strokes ...	3 down

POOL.	
Dr. W. L. Martin, R.N. ...	87 — 6 = 81
Mr. C. M. G. Burns ...	83 — 1 = 82
Mr. E. V. D. Parr ...	92 — 10 = 82
Mr. J. Rodgers ...	94 — 12 = 82
Mr. L. D. Thomas ...	101 — 13 = 83
Mr. T. C. Gray ...	100 — 16 = 84
Mr. E. J. Grist ...	88 — 3 = 85

WAR NOTES.

WARNING TO VESSELS BY RUSSIA.

The following information, received officially, regarding action taken or contemplated by the Russian military and naval authorities in the North, is notified in a *Government Gazette Extraordinary*:—

1. Submarine mines having been laid at the mouth of the Liao River, vessels entering the port of Newchwang are required to observe the regulations the Russian authorities have enacted.

2. If vessels do not show lights within the fighting sphere by night or flags by day, or fail to reply when warned by a gun to answer questions, they will be treated as enemies, and sunk.

SHANGHAI TELEGRAMS.

The following telegrams are from the *N. C. Daily News*:—

"Tokyo, 20th April.—It is gathered from despatches received from Sasebo that the enemy's searchlights at Port Arthur, hitherto four in number, have been increased to six, but the rain and wind on the 12th and 13th instant suited the Japanese destroyers and torpedo-boats, which approached the harbour more closely than ever. The Russian destroyer *Betrachnik* received Japanese shells in her engine-room and sank in a few minutes. The *Petropavlovsk* also sank from striking a mine, smoke and steam rising up from her for several minutes. Thereupon the crews of the Japanese destroyers all stood up and clapped their hands loudly."

"Tokyo, 20th April.—Upon hearing of the death of Admiral Makaroff, the Japanese men-of-war held a memorial service. It is reported in the despatches from Sasebo that the martial spirit of the squadron is running higher. Officers and men, including the Admiral, are dressed for action even in the open sea, and never get regular sleep; yet their health is unaffected."

"Tokyo, 20th April.—It is reported from Gensan that 35 more Cossacks arrived at Syngching yesterday afternoon, and immediately burnt the Japanese houses there."

"Tokyo, 21st April.—It is reported that 13 Russians who arrived at Syngching on the 16th instant have reached Feukhyong, midway between Syngching and Gensan."

"Tokyo, 21st April.—It is reported that the sudden sinking of the *Petropavlovsk* was due to her striking the mine forward of her powder magazine."

"Tokyo, 21st April.—The Japanese people are perfectly free from excitement. The prevailing idea abroad that the utterances of the Japanese Press already suggest a relapse into the chronic disease of pig-headed hatred of Western nations is entirely unfounded. The enlightened sections of the population urge that a victorious end of the war does not imply any change in Japan's moderate and reasonable demands with regard to religious tolerance. It is urged also that the existing system is as liberal as possible, and the Government is taking pains to uphold this principle."

"Tokyo, 21st April.—In the latest engagement, the temperature at the time of the departure of the destroyers and torpedo-boats for Port Arthur was 20 degrees below zero. The crews were able to stand the cold themselves, but the compasses congealing, endeavour had to be made to warm them. Approaching the harbour without any lights, they skillfully avoided the enemy's searchlights, which the Japanese bombers as they passed, after completing the laying of the mechanical mines, on the forenoon of the 13th instant. The Port Arthur batteries were unable to fix the range, owing to the very close approach of the Japanese. The fighting capacity of the Russian squadron is now reduced by eighty per cent, and it is believed that Port Arthur will be desperately defended by the shore batteries."

"Peking, 22nd April.—Several telegrams received from the Tartar Generals of Kirin and Fengtien provinces have stated that the Russian Government is vexing China whenever and in whatever way it can find a chance. The inclination must be to make China abandon its attitude of neutrality. The Chinese Government seems to have decided to take a strong policy against Russia. A few days ago the Government telegraphed to Viceroy Yuan Shi-kai to make war preparations secretly, and at the same time telegraphed to General Ma instructing him to keep a quiet and careful watch and await later orders. A Chinese from Chao-yang states that General Ma's troops in that place are estimated at thirteen battalions, and it is believed that as soon as fighting breaks out between Russia and Japan near Newchwang, General Ma will transfer his camp to Chinchow to prevent the escape of the Russian troops."

"Tokyo, 22nd April.—The proposal is gaining strength to transfer the Imperial headquarters to Hiroshima."

The following is from the *Universal Gazette*:—"Chefoo, 21st April.—Large bodies of Japanese infantry are now stationed in the vicinity of Yichow, digging trenches and throwing up earth-works along the northern bank of the Yalu."

THE "PETROPVLOVSK" LOSSES.

The Tokyo authorities have received particulars regarding the casualties on the Russian flagship *Petropavlovsk*, which was sunk on the 13th inst.—The Commander-in-Chief, 3 senior flag officers; 10 junior flag officers; Vice-Commander; 13 Lieutenants; 1 Chaplain and 536 sailors, including petty officers, were killed. The Commander and one officer escaped, seriously wounded. Grand Duke Cyril, 5 officers and 33 petty officers and sailors also escaped, but all were more or less injured.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Extra sentries have been guarding the Russian Legation at Peking lately.

A Tokyo telegram states that Lake Baikal is already opened and steamers have been able to cross. If true, says the *P. & T. Times*, this is

unusually early, and in view of the present weather we hardly credit it. It is possible that the ice-breaker has been at work.

The Russians are buying up all the obtainable coal in Fengtien, being willing to pay over a fair price for hard coal. The Tartar General protests against such supplies being furnished, but his protests are of course in vain.

Mr. Kreuther, of the Russo-Chinese Bank, has been appointed French Consular Agent at Newchwang.

H.M.S. *Esperanza*'s departure from Newchwang was the signal for some cordial expressions of regret on the part of all nationalities, as the best of relations has been preserved between the Russian authorities and community and the gunboat. M. Grossi, the Civil Administrator, and all the Russian authorities took leave of the boat in person. She would doubtless have left earlier, but it is believed she remained on, until the qualified acceptance of Martial Law by Great Britain was indicated, and also to emphasise the fact that Newchwang is still a treaty and not a Russian port. Russia has given assurances of consideration for British interests in the port which the British Government have accepted, and that at the conclusion of the war full treaty rights shall be restored.

It is now stated—the source being an Italian Press agency—that in the late successful attack on the Port Arthur squadron, ending in the destruction of the *Petropavlovsk*, the Japanese fleet was concealed among the islands of the Miaotao Group, in the Chilli Straits, and intercepted the retreating Russians.

L'Echo de Chine has a telegram from its Chefoo correspondent, stating that the Japanese have disembarked troops at Kinchow to the west of the Yalu. The telegram is somewhat puzzling since no Kinchow is known in the immediate neighbourhood of the Yalu. An important city of that name is situated at the head of the Liaoting Gulf, in close proximity to the railway, and this would be a good deal west of the Yalu.

NOTES FROM THE BOTANICAL GARDENS.

The seeds of Basil (*Ocimum viride*) obtained some months ago from the West Coast of Africa have now grown up into small plants and are in flower. A few may be seen in a pot on the lower pedestal on the left as one descends the steps from the Fountain in the Old Gardens. It has a slight interest for Hongkong because it was once thought to be a specific against mosquitoes.

In the Orchid House is a fine plant of *Hemerocallis aurantiaca* var. *major* which Mr. Wallace, of the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank at Amoy, has most kindly brought down for us from his beautiful garden at that port.

The flower-borders around the outer edge of the middle terrace in the New Gardens so much resemble in general aspect the old-fashioned herbaceous borders so to be seen in such English gardens as Hampton Court, or in the garden for that matter of any old country house, that one concludes that the actual species must be the same. This is in fact largely the case and shows that the vigour of some of our English flowers is little affected by the Hongkong climate.

F. K. V. C.

LEFT HALF NO. 2 CO. SHOOTING.

On Sunday, 24th inst., the members of the above company completed a series of eight Carbine Competitions which have been held during the winter months. Prizes had been subscribed for by the N.C.O.'s of the Half Co. The conditions of the Competition were 7 shots and a sighter at 200, 400, and 500 yards. The highest aggregate for six out of the eight shoots to win.

A fair amount of interest was taken in the Competitions and considerable improvement was noticeable in the quality of the shooting as the competition went on. The Committee feel confident, however, that many of the younger members would make greater progress if they attended practice more often, and trust that when the next shooting season begins the number of competitors will be largely increased.

The following were the best scores sent in:—

Gunner A. Watson ...	499
Sergeant Andrew ...	483
Sergeant Terrill ...	487
Sergeant Gloyd ...	451
Sergeant-Major Rodger ...	433

WEIHAWEI AND BRITISH POLICY.

The *Times* publishes the following despatch from its special correspondent by De Forrest's wireless telegraphy, the message being dated Chinampo, March 21, via Weihaiwei, March 22, per the *Times* special steamer *Haiman*:—

The question of Weihaiwei is one which demands serious attention at the present time. According to the terms of the existing understanding the British lease of this port will be affected in the event of the expulsion of the Russians from Port Arthur. Our policy in this matter has been casual in the extreme. We possess here the finest open harbor either in the Yellow Sea or in the Gulf of Pechili, yet we are indifferent enough to keep it unprotected. It is a sad spectacle to see the half-completed fortifications and the crumbling embankments. There is no evidence to support the theory that the place is indefensible. On the contrary, it could be made almost impregnable even with a small garrison. The Chinese inhabitants, 150,000 in number, are subjects who might be easily and cheaply governed; in fact they practically govern themselves. With Germany slowly drawing her meshes over the Shantung peninsula, we cannot afford to shelve the question of Weihaiwei. To abandon it is impossible; to beg the question as we are doing at present is childlike. With Japan holding Port Arthur in strength and England holding Weihaiwei in similar strength the integrity of China would be assured in spite of all other Powers.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SCAVENGING, DRAINS AND CANALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."

Hongkong, 26th April.
 Sir,—The sickening season has just set in, and so far we do not see much activity on the part of the *militia sanitatis* coming forward to quench the horrible smells emanating from the scavenging, choked drains and filthy canals in various districts of the Colony. A walk in the morning will give an exhibition of a variety of putrid matters lying at the foot of several terraces and corners of streets, with innumerable flies and small insects disputing the prey; the drains exhale a peculiar odour that, if one happens to inhale it with an empty stomach, may suddenly make one fall in a fit. Now, the open canals are being the dumping place of all kinds of dirt that can be imagined, hence the cause of the dreadful stench that prevails in the vicinity of these places; for instance, the canal at West Point is one that calls for immediate disinfecting and flushing to prevent the outbreak of a fresh epidemic. The trumpet of the said *militia* ought to have been sounded a couple of months ago, in which case perhaps this state of things would be less apparent to the public. Thanking you, Mr. Editor, for the insertion of these few lines.—Yours, etc.

PREVENTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."

HAND PERFORMANCES.

Kowloon, 25th April.
 Sir,—With reference to the letters in your paper on the argument as to whether the bands of Regiments should or should not give free entertainments to two letters seem to me to contain much common sense, namely those of "Sembrevé" and of "Gold Luce" in the paper of the 25th. Everyone knows that all soldiers are paid by and are servants of the tax-payers and should give their services free for all entertainments such as King's Birthday parades and band entertainments for nurse-girls and babies. As "Gold Luce" however says, the instruments are the property of the officers of the Regiment. Why not turn out all the band and let them use their natural instruments and sing and whistle? The same seems to me to apply to the Navy with 5 battleships and several cruisers in the harbour—why not turn out all the men to join in the chorus? To be logical and carry the argument further, why not make all members of the Government service and I assume His Excellency the Governor would, if asked politely, be only too delighted to conduct the music, and I am sure that an entertainment of this kind would, especially if helped by the Magistrates, medical officers, members of the Educational Department and Lunatic Asylums, be a source of far greater pleasure and mirth than would be caused by the playing of a mere military band.—Yours, etc.

LOGICAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."

Kowloon, 26th April.

Sir,—A correspondence as begun by "Sembrevé," who is not open to conviction, and who apparently wishes to get something for nothing, is waste of time. Anyone who wishes to get at the facts of the case can do so with a little trouble.
 At the same time, has it effected anything in the public interest? If the public desire to hear more music, "Sembrevé" has gone the worst way about asking for the concession. If it is not a concession, let him order a band down without delay!

LEX.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."

Hongkong, 26th April.

Sir,—I have been at some pains to pick up the thread of "Gold Luce's" somewhat pointless arguments, but have been obliged to give the task up in despair. Neither do I feel disposed to gratify his laudable curiosity as to the sum I have to disburse in taxes annually. It will be sufficient, therefore, if I inform him that I do contribute along with several hundreds of others in the Colony my little mite to the coffers of the Government, and therefore to the Military contribution. Whether the Military authorities spend the money they receive in building fortifications or purchasing military boots is quite beside the question at issue; the fact remains that the money is paid, and that fact alone entitles every taxpayer to air his grievances and express his views, and this I certainly do without fear or favour. It would be advisable for "Gold Luce" in future to make quite sure of the soundness of any proposition he advances, as he has evidently quite mistaken the purport and tenor of my former letters, which were more intended for the purpose of protecting the interests and rights of the music-loving public than to study and petty grievances of officers.—Yours faithfully,

SEMBREVÉ.

WEATHER REPORT.

The Hongkong Observatory yesterday issued the following report:—

On the 25th at 11.30 a.m. The barometer has risen in China and the Philippines, and fallen greatly in the N.E. of Japan, where there exists at present a well marked depression, which appears to have come from the north-east.
 Gradients are moderate on the China Coast, but are increasing, and fresh N. to N.E. winds may be expected in the Formosa Channel.
 Over the northern part of the China Sea there are slight and light variable winds may be expected there.
 Forecast:—Light N. to N.E. winds, fine.

HONGKONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

A meeting of the Legislative Council was held yesterday afternoon in the Council Chamber. Present:—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT, F. H. MAY, C.M.G.
 HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR-GENERAL VILLIERS HATTON, C.B. (Commanding the Troops).
 Hon. A. M. THOMSON (Acting Colonial Secretary).
 Hon. Sir H. S. BRERLEY (Attorney-General).
 Hon. L. A. M. JOHNSON (Colonial Treasurer).
 Hon. A. W. BEESON (Registrar-General).
 Hon. Captain L. A. W. BARNES-LAWRENCE, R.N. (Harbour Master).
 Hon. P. N. H. JONES (Acting Director of Public Works).
 Hon. Sir C. P. CHATER, C.M.G.
 Hon. Dr. Ho Kai, C.M.G.
 Hon. Wei A. YUK.
 Mr. R. F. JOHNSON (Clerk of Councils).

FINANCIAL.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the Financial Minutes (Nos. 24 to 26) and moved that they be referred to the Finance Committee.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the Report of the Finance Committee (No. 5) and moved its adoption.

The ACTING COLONIAL TREASURER seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

PEAK RESERVATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the third reading of the Bill entitled an Ordinance for the Reservation of a Residential Area in the Hill District.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded, and the motion was agreed to and the Bill passed.

The Council adjourned *sine die*.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Finance Committee was held after the Council, the Acting Colonial Secretary (Hon. A. M. Thomson) presiding.

The following votes were approved:—

PUBLIC CONVENIENCE.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$2,000 in aid of the vote, Public Works. Extraordinary, to meet cost of erecting a public urinal on the northern side of the hill close to the upper tram station at the Peak.

TREASURY EXPENSES.

The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$3,280 in aid of the vote, Treasury, for the following Staff required from 1st May to 31st December, 1904, to collect Crown Rent, etc., in the New Territories:—

PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS.
 Clerk * at \$600 per annum... = \$400
 2 clerks * at \$480 per annum each = 960
 For Tally 2 clerks at \$800 per annum each... = 800
 For Tally 2 clerks at \$480 per annum each... = 640
 Total... = \$2,800

OTHER CHARGES.
 Conveyance Allowance—Collector = \$240
 7 clerks... = 560
 Total... = \$800

* Temporary Sheriff (\$480) and Assistance (\$144) under vote Treasury not now required.
 † Sheriff (\$840) under vote Colonial Secretary's Office not now required.

CLEANING TANKS.
 The Officer Administering the Government recommended the Council to vote a sum of \$5,100 in aid of the vote Public Works. Extraordinary, to meet the cost of supplying and erecting sixteen tanks in Nos. 9 and 10 Health Districts, Victoria.

This was all the business.

THE AMERICAN STAGE.

Mr. William Winter, who is known as "the Clement Scott of America," has made an extraordinary attack upon the condition now prevailing on the American stage.

"Veterans," says Mr. Winter, "who might have played before Noah when he landed from the ark, wander about the stage and totter and mumble. Persons who were 'supers' yesterday are 'stars' to-day. Three-cornered girls, proclaimed as 'actresses,' rasp the welkin with voices that rival the screech of the peacock. The slimy wretch of Mr. Ibsen and the lunacy of Mr. Maeterlinck are made to trickle into the public mind and turn the public stomach. Degenerates from foreign lands, provided with rancid plays about libertines and wantons, fix a steadfast gaze upon the coast of Greenland, and whisper to the scenery in the third grave, and are vaunted as prodigies of 'genius' and 'intensity.' Historical demigods of England and France are theatrically celebrated for social delectation. Women whom scandalous divorce has made notorious diffuse upon the theatre the effluvia of their foul reputations. Prize-fighters and unspeakable cranks are obtruded as 'actors.' There has not been a time in fifty years when the theatre was at so low a level as it has reached to-day—when the impulse is vanity, the motive is greed, the method is sordid engrossment; when it is exclusively 'business,' and the result is a barren traffic and an arid waste."
 The title of "the Clement Scott of America" is well deserved!

3,000 NEWSPAPERS.
 RECOMMEND MACNIVEN & CAMERON'S PENS. THE WAVELET PEN, for Easy Writing. THE FLYING SCOTCHMAN PEN, instead of Quill. THE FLYING J. writes 20 words per dip. Sold at all Stationers. WAVELET WORKS, EDINBURGH. [402-1]

THE KOWLOON LAND AND BUILDING Co., LD.

CONFIRMATORY MEETING.

An extraordinary general meeting of the shareholders of the above Company was held at the office of the Company at noon yesterday, for the purpose of confirming the special resolutions which were passed at the extraordinary general meeting of shareholders on the 9th instant. There were present Messrs. T. H. Reid (chairman), A. Rodger, T. F. Hough, E. B. Shepherd, W. H. Gaskell, S. J. Michael, M. S. Northcote, and A. S. Hooper (secretary).

The SECRETARY having read the notice convening the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN said that the meeting had been called to confirm the special resolutions which were passed at the extraordinary general meeting of shareholders on the 9th instant.

Mr. S. J. MICHAEL proposed that resolution A be confirmed, viz. in Article 81 the words "Five Hundred Dollars" shall be substituted for the words "One Hundred and Fifty Dollars."

Mr. M. S. NORTHCOTE seconded and it was agreed.

Mr. S. J. MICHAEL proposed that resolution B be confirmed. In Article 102 the words "An Auditor" shall be substituted for the words "Two Auditors."

Mr. E. B. SHEPHERD seconded, and it was agreed.

Mr. S. J. MICHAEL proposed that resolution C be confirmed. In Article 103 the word "Auditor" shall be substituted for the word "Auditors."

Mr. M. S. NORTHCOTE seconded and it was agreed.

That was all the business.

POLICE COURT.

Tuesday, 26th April.

BEFORE MR. H. H. J. GOMPERTZ (ACTING POLICE MAGISTRATE).

EUROPEAN RUNS AMOK.

A marine, William Thompson, of H.M.S. *Reveille*, after "liquoring-up" at various grog-shops, ran amok at Praya East on the night of the 25th. Police-Constable Daveney promptly tackled the madman, a furious struggle ensuing. Both men had muscle, and both, too, could use their fists, honours for some time being fairly even. A Chinese *lukong* rushing up to P. C. Daveney's assistance planted a hard smack on the redoubt's jaw, sending the man reeling to one side. It took three of the Force to take Thompson to the Police Station, and when he arrived there he smashed a constable's watch. Yesterday morning he was fined \$2 for being disorderly, \$1 for damaging property, \$3 compensation for the goods he had broken, and \$10 for assaulting the constable. Inspector Collett conducted the case.

GAMBLING.

Seventeen cooks, house-boys, etc., mostly in the employ of Europeans, were charged with gambling at No. 24, Mesque Street, ground floor. The first two defendants, accused with conducting the game, pleaded "not guilty," but the remainder admitted partiality. The charge was proven, the two men being sentenced to pay \$20 each or one month's imprisonment; \$3 or seven days' gaol apiece for the remainder.

Twenty-two Chinamen, mostly rice-pounders, were charged with gambling at No. 305, Des Voeux Road West. The first defendant, who was also charged with keeping a common gambling-house, was sentenced to pay \$10 or go to prison for 14 days, the rest \$3 or six days.

BEFORE MR. J. H. KEMP (SECOND POLICE MAGISTRATE).

ALLEGED WORTHLESS LUKONG.

An Indian constable, charged with assaulting a Chinese constable, said that while complainant together with some other Chinamen, was sitting on a bridge at Aberdeen, smoking a cigarette, he observed a Chinaman carrying firewood. When this man saw him he ran, so defendant gave chase, but the robber escaped. Returning, defendant asked constable, "Why did you not stop the thief?" Complainant and friends thereupon set upon him, beat him, and tore his clothes. Since defendant's last case, about eight or ten days ago, when His Worship fined a man \$15, the Chinese had a "down" on him. "Were you not drunk?" asked the Magistrate.

"No," said the Sikh, "did you ever see a man drunk who was this?" pointing to an iron bracelet, an Indian mark of priesthood.

\$7 or 14 days.

On the 25th ult. a Chinese contractor, of No. 35, D'Almeida Street, was on his way up Pinewood Battery to the New Forts, his mission being that of paying wages. Suddenly two villainous natives jumped from the brushwood, threw pepper in his eyes, knocked him senseless, and robbed him of \$42.

A Chinaman was charged with the crime yesterday, the case being remanded. The Police hope to soon make another arrest.

The death is announced of Samuel Smiles, author of *Self Help*, a book which once had a great vogue. He was born at Haddington, Scotland, in 1812.

A Sanmaria paper on the occasion of the visit of Mr. G. B. Stratton, of the Straits Civil Service, mistook him for a gunboat and spoke of *de engelsche kanoniersboot "Stratton"*. The mistake seems to have arisen from his initials being G. B.

THE CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

CHINA, JAPAN, AND THE FAR EAST.
 The Civil Service Estimates for the year ending March 31, 1905, were issued last month. We give some details concerning the votes relating specially to China, Japan, and the far East. The figures enclosed in parentheses are last year's votes, and are given for purposes of comparison. Where no comparisons are made the figures are the same as last year.

DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR BUILDINGS.

Under the heading of "New Works, Alterations, Additions, and Purchases (including Furniture in connection therewith)," are the following votes:—Siam, Bangkok, 1,000 (900); boundary wall, &c. 622 (500); national servants' quarters for Vice-Consul, 218 (total, 1,640). China, Japan, and Corea: Erection of new buildings, alterations and additions to existing buildings, and acquisition of sites, 110,250 (96,000). China Peking: Completion of erection of Students' quarters, 3,750 (4,000). The Indian Government contributes a sum annually towards the cost of Diplomatic and Consular Services in China, Persia, and Siam, the rents payable for buildings, &c. in China forming a part of such Services. The vote in this section of 410 for the maintenance and repair of consular buildings in China, Japan, Corea and Siam is included in a general vote for the maintenance of cemeteries in foreign countries.

THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE.

China—(partly repayable from Indian revenues).—Envoys Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, 25,000; Secretary of Legation, 2,800; Chinese Secretary, 11,200; Chaplain, 2,000; Commercial Attaché, 11,200; and 1,167 for rent. Japan—Envoys Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, 4,000; Secretary of Legation, 2,800; Japanese Secretary, 11,900 (9,000). Corea—Minister Resident, 11,500 (9,000). Siam—The only vote under this head is 11,500 for the Minister Resident and Consul-General, which is the same as previous years. From the statement showing the distribution of Second and Third Secretaries in His Majesty's Embassies and Legations abroad on December 1st 1903, we note there is one Second and one Third Secretary at China, one Second Secretary at Japan, and one Second Secretary at Siam, the salaries and allowances of which are not stated. Houses are provided in all the above cases except for Chaplain at Peking and Commercial Attaché, and are taken into account in another vote for rents and taxes.

THE CONSULAR SERVICE.

China.—The total estimates for the Services in China are 265,042 (£25,991). The votes are as follows:—Salaries, allowances, and wages, 252,768 (£25,147); Legation Guards, 1,500; outfit and travelling, (£5,000) £6,400; rent allowances, 11,800 (£2,000); postage, 4,500 (£575); incidental expenses, 11,753 (£1,336); prison expenses, witnesses, deportations, &c., 11,650; medical attendance, 11,435 (£1,170); relief of distressed British subjects, 255, Japan, Corea, and Siam.—The total for Services in Japan and Siam is 27,535 (£2,912). The votes are as follows:—Salaries, allowances, and wages, 22,300 (£2,303); Legation Guards, 1,500; outfit and travelling, 11,600; rent allowances, 11,200 (£1,260); postage, 4,250 (£1,175); incidental expenses, (1,989) 1,019; prison expenses, witnesses, deportations, &c., 1,450; medical attendance, 11,115 (£1,215); and relief of distressed British subjects, 225.

China.—Peking: Surgeon, 2,800 (£275). The votes under the heading Shanghai Court and Consulate-General are as follows:—Chief Justice, 11,800; Consul-General and Registrar of Shipping, 11,500; Assistant Judge, 11,200 (£1,160); Vice-Consul, 7,700; Crown Advocate, 2,400; Chief Clerk, 2,200 (£310), including 1,100 for services as Registrar, and 250 Sheriff and Coroner's allowance; Clerk, 2,100 (£200); Usher, 200. Total, 48,500 (£5,476). Then come the votes for the Consuls, as follows:—Amoy, 11,000; Antung, 2,800; Canton, 11,200; Chefoo, 2,800; Chungking (Consul-General), 2,900; Chinkiang, 2,800; Chungking (Vice-Consul), 2,800; Foochow, 11,000; Hangchow, 2,800; Hankow, 11,100; Ichang, 2,800; Kiachow, 2,800; Kiang, 2,800; Kiangchow and Pakhoi, 2,800; Kongmoon, 2,800; Macao (Vice-Consul), 2,200; Mukden, 2,800; Nanking, 2,800; Ningbo, 2,800; Nippon, 2,800; Swatow, 2,800; Tientsin, 2,800; Tientsin (Consul-General), 11,100; ditto (Vice-Consul), 2,800; Wuchow, 2,800; Wuhu, 2,800; Yunnanfu, 2,800. Total, 222,000 (£22,800). There are also votes for Assistants and Students as follows:—Thirteen first-class at £400 a year each, £5,200; thirteen second-class at £350 a year each, £4,550; allowance to assistants employed in Chinese Secretary's office, 2,200. Interpreters' allowances to assistants—nine at £100 and six at £50 a year each, £1,200; ditto as accountant at Peking, 2,800; ditto to assistants as Vice-Consuls at Canton, 2,200; at Hankow and Foochow 2,100 each—total, 4,300 (£4,600); ditto to assistant in Mixed Court, Shanghai, 2,800; ditto to assistant in Shipping Office, Shanghai, 2,800; allowance to assistant employed in Corea, 2,800; nineteen student interpreters at £200 a year each, £3,800; prizes for ditto, 1,500; and to provide allowances to make up students' salaries to £300 a year each whilst serving as assistants, £1,300. There are the usual votes for teachers, writers, or linguists, constables, boatmen, porters, coolies, and others employed on public service at the different Consulates. The total amount for salaries, allowances, and wages is £54,018 (£53,397), but from this a deduction of £1,250 is made on account of savings by vacancies, &c., leaving as the final total, £52,768 (£52,147). The vote for the Legation Guards at Peking is £500; outfit and travelling, including allowance for passage for consular officers, student interpreters, and others, £5,000 (£4,400); rent allowances, £1,800 (£2,000); and postage, 2,500 (£275). In this section there is also, under the heading of "Incidental Expenses," a vote of £1,253 (£1,036) for allowances assigned to the different Consulates for office contingencies, including extra boat hire, boatmen, coolie hire, &c. There is, in addition, a vote of £550 (£400) for incidental expenses of missions and Consulates not included in fixed office allowances, making a total for incidental expenses of £2,203 (£1,936). From this £450 is deducted for printing, stationery, postage, and prison expenses, paid from fixed allowances, but chargeable under other sections, leaving £1,753 (£1,536). The remaining votes are: Prison expenses, witnesses, deportations, &c., 1,165; medical attendance, 11,435 (£1,170); relief of distressed British subjects, 225.

Japan.—The following are the votes for salaries, allowances, and wages:—Consuls: Kobe, 11,000 (£950); Nagasaki, 2,800; Shimoda, 2,800; and 2,800 (£700); Tainan, 2,800; Yokohama, 2,800. Vice-Consuls: Yokohama, 2,800; Hakodate, 2,800; Hiogo, 2,800; Osaka, 2,800; Yokohama, 2,800. Assistants: Five first-class at £400 a year each, £2,000; five second-class at £350 a year each, £1,750; six interpreters' allowances to assistants at £100 a year each, £600; allowance to assistant employed in Japanese Secretary's office, £100; allowance to assistant employed in Corea, £20; three student interpreters, one at £300 and two at £250 each, £800; to provide allowances to make up students' salaries to £300 a year each whilst serving as assistants, £1,300. There is a further vote under this head for writers, linguists, servants, boatmen, &c., amounting to £2,282 (£2,755). We then come to the vote for the Legation Guards, which is £235. Under "Outfit and Travelling" there

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Hongkong, 30th March, 1904.

is a vote of £1,000 allowances for passages for Consular officers, student interpreters, and others. The remaining votes are: Rent allowances, £225 (£1,000); postage, £150 (£100); incidental expenses, £233 (£233); incidental expenses of mission and Consulates not included in fixed office allowances, £120; medical attendance, £236; and relief of distressed British subjects, £225.

Siam.—There are the following votes:—Judge: Bangkok, 11,000. Consul: Bangkok, 2,800 (£900). Chiangmai, 2,800 and £30 local allowance. Vice-Consul: Bangkok, 2,750. First Assistant, 2,400; Two Assistants Second, 2,700; Medical Attendant, 2,200 (£200); allowance to Assistant as Registrar, £50; allowance to Assistant stationed at Nan, £50; Two Student Interpreters at £200 a year each, £400; to provide allowances to make up students' salaries to £300 a year whilst serving as assistants, £200; extra clerical assistance, 110; writers, teachers, grooms, constables, &c., 1,689 (£485). There is a further vote for similar expenses at Chiangmai and Nan, amounting to £579 (£548). The remaining votes are:—Outfit and travelling, £500; rent allowances, £225 (£210); postage, £75 (£50); incidental expenses, £350; prison expenses, £450; medical attendance, £1,115 (£1,215). The only votes are, Consul at Batavia, £300 for office expenses; Vice-Consul at Samarang, £54 (£25) fee allowances; ditto Sourabaya, £38 fee allowances; ditto Balok Pappan, £6 fee allowances.

Borneo (North Borneo, Brunei, and Sarawak).—Consul-General, is also High Commissioner, salary provided from Colonial Funds; office expenses, £60; Consul, £407 (£400), with £200 for office expenses. Consular Agent at Sandakan, £5 fee allowances.

Philippine Islands.—The votes are—Consul at Manila, 11,500 (£1,100), with £400 office expenses; Vice-Consul, 2,800 (£400); Vice-Consul at Cebu, £15 fee allowances; Vice-Consul at Iloilo, £100 for office expenses.

Cochin China.—There is a vote of £300 for the Consul at Saigon, with a local allowance (not pensionable) of £100, and office expenses, £150.

APPROPRIATIONS IN AID.
 Under the above head are the following items:—Contribution from Indian revenues in respect of the Diplomatic and Consular Services in China, Persia, and Siam, 11,046 (£4,087). Fees, fines, &c., connected with the Services in China, 119,300 (£10,475); ditto, Japan and Siam, 41,350 (£4,450).

GRANTS IN AID OF LOCAL REVENUE.

Under the above head there is a vote for £3,000 (£3,000) for Weihaiwei, but there is no sum taken as estimated contribution from revenue of the dependency.

PENSIONS.

Under the details of increase and diminution in the superannuation and retired allowances, we note the following changes relating to the Far East. Retiring allowances through ill-health, J. H. Longford, Japan, Consul, 2,700. Through age, Sir E. L. O'Malley, formerly Attorney-General Hongkong, £250. Captain S. H. Harford, Consul, Manila, £250 13s. 4d. The following pensions have ceased through death:—Sir G. T. M. O'Brien, K.C.M.G., formerly Colonial Secretary of Hongkong, £500; P. J. Hughes, China Consular Service, £1,244 8s. 10d.; W. S. Ayrton, China Consular Service, 2,622 4s. 5d.

SHIPPING NOTES.

FOG AND DRIZZLE.

The China Navigation s.s. *Tanaka* and the China Merchants s.s. *Chiyen* arrived from Shanghai yesterday with passengers, mail and freight. They are on the Shanghai-Canton run. Captain Eddy and Stewart report fog and drizzle, but the passage was smooth. The *Douglas*, s.s. *Thales*, Capt. Rohson, from Swatow, reports light variable winds.

THE "CATHERINE APCAR."
 The *Catherine Apcar* (Messrs. David Sassoon & Co., Ltd.) arrived from Calcutta yesterday with 14 European passengers and 310 Chinese. She had between 1,500 and 2,000 tons of cargo and 12 packages of mail. Capt. A. Stewart reports light winds and smooth sea between Singapore and Hongkong. The *Apcar* Line are doing well.

THE GERMAN MAIL.
 The Norddeutscher Lloyd *Prinz Heinrich*, Capt. R. Heintze, arrived from Yokohama and Shanghai yesterday. She is on her way west with the mail. On arrival here she had 130 cabin passengers and 81 Chinese. Besides a small quantity of freight for this port there is some 2,000 tons of cargo aboard.

A FLEET OF COLLIERIES.
 Colliers continue to arrive from both east and west, but there seems to be a particular demand for English coal. Yesterday the Norwegian s.s. *Orang*, 1,001 tons, 150 h.p., arrived from Newport with orders with 1,800 tons of coal, and the *Orang*, a British freighter of 2,773 tons, 400 h.p., arrived from Berry Dock, South Wales, with 6,500 tons consigned to Messrs. Dowell & Co. Capt. Henry reports a fine passage from Salsburg, the vessel's immediate departure port. The *Orang*, also, reported fine weather from Singapore.

RICE.
 No less than four vessels arrived with cargoes of rice yesterday. The German s.s. *Mackay*, Norwegian s.s. *Borg*, and Norwegian s.s. *Prometheus* were from Bangkok, and the German s.s. *Emma Layken* from Saigon. The consignments in each instance are different. The *Mackay* brought 1,900 tons for Messrs. Butterfield and Swire, the *Borg* 1,300 tons for Messrs. Wing Chun, the *Prometheus* 1,900 tons for Messrs. Sander, Weiler & Co., and the *Emma Layken* a cargo of 1,900 tons is for another consignee. The quartette reported fine weather.

THE N.D.L.
 The North German Lloyd steamship line will discontinue running to Manila. The line had two ships between Manila and Singapore, making trips every fortnight. They connected at Singapore with the vessels of the North German Lloyd bound for Europe and passengers and freight were carried from here to Singapore or vice versa. Tickets were sold through to Europe and Manila, and through freight was accepted between Manila and Europe. The business of the line consisted in carrying this freight and in bringing here merchandise and passengers from Europe. Passengers were thus enabled to save the trip to Hongkong and to save considerable time. Hongkong in a small measure may benefit.



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Hongkong, 15th April, 1904.

IN COREA.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.]

SEOUL—A STUPIDOUS CESSPOOL.

Seoul, 16th April.

The streets of Seoul are covered several feet thick with the accumulated filth of centuries, and now the Korean authorities have suddenly started trying to clean the place completely in a day or two. It has dawned on them that they ought to assume an appearance of modern civilisation now, and make some show of emulating the Japanese. In fact, the Koreans are beginning to feel ashamed of their dirt in presence of so many strangers. There have never been drains in Seoul. In several parts of the town old streamlets still survive, struggling down from the adjacent hills to the big river, struggling through huge superincumbent accumulations of rubbish and garbage, the deposit of centuries of lazy life. These poor little hillside streamlets degenerate into a sort of substitute for drains, and they are in fact almost stagnant, almost waterless ditches of filth. They might be called drains, perhaps.

But generally speaking, Seoul is in about the condition one would expect to find in an untrained, well-stocked farmyard that had not been cleaned out in any way for a thousand years. The Korean seems to say, growls, "Why trouble to carry rubbish away? Leave it alone, it soon gets trodden into the ground, and you will never see it again. Then you save so much carrying." So all "matter which is not wanted" simply stays where it happens to fall. A walk through Seoul is a wade through orange-peel, fish-bones, eggshells, rotten cabbage, dead rats, mangy dogs alive in more ways than one—these are a few of the predominant features of the Korean capital.

Buildings there are almost none at all. There are mat-huts by the million. It really must be the greatest collection of pigsties in the world. I have been a good deal in the interior of China, and I thought some of those towns reached the very top notch of putridity, but I apologise to them.

Seoul is, in short, a city of hovels. The Imperial Palace would be considered not very glorious for a district magistrate in the prosperous sections of China. The great Temple of Heaven, which I suppose is the No. 1 joss-house of Korea, is shabby and bare and discreditable, compared with the Man Mo Temple in Hongkong. The foreign legations, two little hotels, the railway-station, and possibly three or four other foreign buildings, are all right, and in the Japanese quarter there is a fairly good little Japanese town, but the rest of Seoul is composed of huts and hovels, from end to end of the city. They are not all made of mats alone, some are of mud, with lumps of uncut stone embedded in it; and some of the roofs are of tile, very rough and poor. And the Koreans are correspondingly wretched little things. Shopkeeping is mostly done by Chinese and Japanese; and as far as I can see, all skilled labour is Chinese or Japanese too. At any rate, if you hear a sound of sawing wood, of chipping stone, of hammering nails, the whirr of a sewing-machine, any noise of active labour, and if you go to see, you usually find it is not a Korean at work. They seem generally to do little else but fetch and carry, talk, and look on.

To some readers, the recital of the manifold uncleanness of the Koreans may seem horrible and disgusting, and some may think such things would be better unwritten. But there is need that these things should be known and understood, not merely as showing the desirability of some strong Power taking this country in-hand, but for the additional reason that the conditions may have an important influence on the actual course of the present war. Seoul is a breeding-ground of epidemic diseases. Every year Korea loses many thousands of lives by epidemics, and there has practically never been anything done to prevent them. Seoul usually has the largest death-roll because it is the largest dirt-hole. The civilised world is greatly concerned when a few hundred people are removed quickly and almost painlessly by being shot, or blown up, or bludgeoned, or drowned; it is something that interests people greatly. I think it is a matter of greater concern when many thousands die, not in a flash of a moment, but gradually and with awful sufferings, in the agonies of cholera and other scourges.

The Korean official records show that there were over 370,000 deaths from cholera in 1786, including 60,000 in Seoul; the Crown Prince was one of the victims. Thirteen years later there was another epidemic, of a kind not quite clear, but it may have been the "black plague." In 1815 the land was ravaged by a kind of typhus, and 1821 saw one of the worst visitations of cholera ever known. In Seoul alone, ten thousand people died in ten days, and the disease extended its ravages into the following year. Then in 1832 began a series of famines and epidemics, chiefly cholera, continuing uninterrupted for nine years. Typhus again swept over Seoul in 1839, and there are men now living who remember seeing the corpses piled in thousands just inside the South Gate, awaiting interment. The people, desperate with hunger and suffering, became riotous, and stormed the Government granaries, but found that all the grain supposed to be stored against famine had been stolen by the officials. The Prime Minister was chiefly responsible, and had to fly for his life, hiding for months in the provinces. This brings the terrible record down to the present generation, which has been much the same. Ten years ago, the Japanese army fighting against the Chinese in Korea had an immense sick-list, and lost ten times as many lives by Korean epidemics as by Chinese bullets.

Just now, with chilly days and freezing nights, germ-life is comparatively inactive, but

the warm weather is close at hand, and will bring out the danger now dormant. Seoul lives on the surface of a stratum of ancient and modern filth that must be yards deep. In the vast majority of the houses there is no attempt at sanitation in any shape; but merely by usage, one corner of the mud floor comes to be recognised as the general latrine, and the sewage is left to meander out through a hole in the wall, at the floor level. Some few houses attain the distinction of establishing a cesspool just outside, but in most cases the bare ground is cesspool enough. The reader may think such conditions prevail only among the very lowest and poorest people who have no chance to manage better. In all countries there are extreme depths of poverty, here and there unavoidably associated with squalor and filth. But in Korea it is general. Dirty habits and disgusting indolence characterise even the highest classes.

Yet there is much hope, if they are taken in hand, for they readily respond to external influence. In fact, they seem eager to be ordered about. I think their predominant characteristic, even more than apathy, is a craving to be dominated, influenced, even bullied. Their apathy is only the sprawling of a "scared-runner" where nobody has provided it with a pole. They need someone to direct them, and they seem the most willing people in the world. They only lack a backbone of their own, and they seem only too willing to lean on anyone.

When Marquis Ito was known to be coming to Seoul, there was a sudden rush (if such a thing is possible among Koreans) to cleanse the Augean stables. The effort was weak and ludicrous, but it has shown a good disposition, and an urgency for better performance in future. First, when the Seoul authorities were formally notified that the Marquis would come, as a very special messenger from Emperor to Emperor, it was unofficially hinted that the streets along which the distinguished visitor would pass were not quite a credit to the nation. So the Korean authorities, very readily promised to have things cleaned up a bit, but they did not get to work on the execution of the promise till two days before Marquis Ito's arrival. Then proclamations were posted all over the city, telling the people that the streets were disgraceful and must be cleaned. It is characteristic that the proclamation was printed on plain slips of common paper, with no official heading, no Government seal nor Imperial coat of arms, no distinguishing mark at all. It has, in fact, neither heading nor signature. Translated, it reads about as follows:—"Dirt is disgraceful, therefore all householders must clear their street-fronts and gutters by the 18th of March. This is an official proclamation which must be obeyed or there will be penalties." That is all. And the Koreans gathered in wondering crowds, staring at the placard on the wall, and hazarding guesses what it might be about, till some clever man came along who could read. He would spell it out aloud, laboriously, and interrupt himself at intervals with a running fire of comment, and the rest would listen and sometimes all talk at once. They are great talkers, and their language is one of those that use up a large number of words to express any idea. Ten words of English need fifty of Korean.

There is a similar ratio of words to deeds. If there are to be ten men working there must be fifty to look on and talk. That is how the cleansing of the city proceeded. A spade, for instance, takes five men to handle it; one is captain, and holds the spade, while two have ropes tied to it and help to tow the spade through the soil, and the other two men are to look on, and take alternate spells at pulling the ropes. This is the way fields are tilled, and it is the way the garbage is being scratched up in the streets of the metropolis. The spade, blade is about the size of a drawing-room coal-shovel, and some spades have a crew of seven men. Out of curiosity I timed one crew of six; they lifted into a basket about two cubic feet of rubbish in twenty minutes. About every five minutes all hands would knock off work to discuss the weather, or the fatality of human effort, and to give their nether garments another hitch. Seldom can you see half a dozen Koreans together but at least one of them at any given moment must be hitching up his trousers and readjusting his waistband, for these people tie themselves together so negligently that they never stay tied long.

These gangs of coolies have been working in various parts of the city, listlessly digging up the dirt from roadside ditches and piling it in heaps on the roadway. It was quite a long time before they reached the next stage, the removal of the heaps, and by that time a good deal of the stuff had slipped back to where it came from. It is of the blue-black slimy sort, with an effluvia strong enough to stop a clock. The workmen carefully stacked this in mounds at the street corners in time for the arrival of Marquis Ito, and no doubt he regarded the heaps as emblematic decorations, suggesting "The old order changeth, giving place to new."

In front of the Emperor's palace I saw 37 men lift one telegraph pole, while nearly 100 workmen looked on. It was supposed to be a gang of 150, and they had a lot of poles to place in position, but the whole gang kept to one pole at a time, and took nearly an hour at it. It was a big pole, certainly, two feet thick at the base, with a heavy top piece to carry about 80-wires, for there is a lot of new work being done in Seoul now, erecting telegraph and telephone-poles. The gang would raise the end of the pole a foot or two, prop it, and rest a few minutes. By the time they had it nearly upright, with the foot of the pole resting on the edge of the pit dug to receive it, they found the pit was too narrow, and it took about ten minutes to widen it an inch or two. The order had been issued that all these poles, which have been lying along the roadsides for a long time

must be up in time for Marquis Ito to see but it was only possible in the time to get about a tenth of them erected.

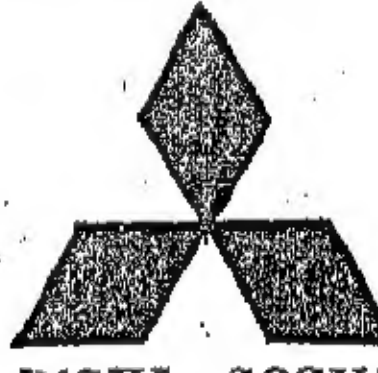
Still, it is important to note the willingness shown by the Korean officials to do whatever they thought the Japanese would wish. Their intentions seem to be all right, and with patience and plenty of time all will be well with Korea under the Japanese stimulus.

By the way, one of the commonest sights in Seoul would afford English working-men food for thought. Twenty Korean labourers with picks are set to dig up a bad piece of road; they have a rigid rule among themselves that no man must work faster than another, and so when one stops to moisten his hands for a fresh hold of the pick, all stop; and the multiplied delays make the work go more slowly than in any other country I have ever seen. All picks rise simultaneously, then each man slowly looks round to see how the rest are getting on. Then the picks, poised aloft for several seconds, cautiously commence the down-stroke, but nobody dare let his weapon come down smartly, for fear he should get himself disabled for repeating the mission of the performance. The coolies are not quite clever enough to make all the picks sink exactly together, and so at the sound every man has to look at every other, to notice which one was out of time. The resulting slowness is such as "passeth all understanding."

Reverting to the subject of epidemics, there is another evil that helps to make Korea a plague spot; in all the country there is no such thing as waterworks. Surface-wells, visibly fouled by surface-sewage, are the main source of water-supply in the city, for the river is too far. In the Japanese quarter, however, the water is kept pretty clear of drainage. But as a rule no Korean would take the trouble to dig a well ten feet deep if he found any water at five feet, and no such thing as a filter is ever dreamed of in their philosophy. Tea-drinking and the boiling of the water would no doubt do much to lessen the danger, but that the water is seldom made to really boil, and the poorer classes cannot afford to drink tea always. So death stalks over the land, and plucky little Japan will have to fight a greater foe than the Russian arms.

TURBINES TRIUMPH.

The adoption of turbine engines for the two Cunard liners is the boldest development in the history of shipbuilding since Brunel built the *Great Eastern*. If successful, it will sound the death knell of the ordinary type of reciprocating engine for all save small and special purposes. On land turbines have advanced from one great success to another. They are now very largely employed in driving electric lighting machinery, and—gratifying triumph of all—the whole of the horsepower required in the electric generating station for the electrified "Underground" in London, the largest power station in the world, is to be furnished by Parsons' turbines. On sea the progress of the turbine, since the *Turbinia*, astonished experts of all nations at the Jubilee Naval Review, has been a little more chequered. The loss of the *Viper* and the *Cobra*, though due to causes not even remotely associated with the machinery, gave the new mechanism a set-back in the Navy; but we have the *Valer*, a combination of turbine engines for high speed with economical reciprocating engines for cruising purposes, in commission, and the *Despatch*, a third class cruiser which is to be turbine-driven, under construction. On the Clyde and in the Channel turbines have given equally successful results. But it is an enormous stride from a cross-Channel steamer or even a third class cruiser, to the largest and most powerfully engineered vessels designed, and herein lies the true enterprise of the decision. However, the conclusion has not been arrived at without elaborate experimentation and trials of unusual magnitude, and the Cunard engines, individually, will not be much larger than those being installed at the "Underground" Power station. And if the experiment is the success it deserves to be, no one will rejoice more than the marine engineers. The great advantage of the turbine is the avoidance of the alternate thrust and pull of the reciprocating pattern, which in these days of enormous speed and increased horsepower throw a tremendous strain upon the finest steel. The absence of vibration, reduced space, and greater simplicity of working parts in the turbine, all alleviate the most serious difficulties the marine engineer has to face.



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Hongkong, 26th April, 1904. [1102]

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Hongkong, 6th April, 1904. [927-2]

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HONGKONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

ANNUAL REPORT.

The following is the report of the General Committee of the Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce, for the year ending 31st December, 1903, for presentation to the members at the annual meeting, to be held at 3.30 p.m. to-day:—

During the past year, which was somewhat encroached upon by 1902 Report, fewer subjects have engaged the attention of the Chamber, but much satisfactory work has nevertheless been accomplished in certain directions.

SUGAR CONVENTION.

A copy of this Convention, which came into force on the 1st September, 1902, was published in the last Report. Since then much progress has been made by the Permanent Commission in putting through the necessary legislative machinery in order to comply with the terms of the Convention.

As the Imperial Government undertook, on behalf of the Colonies not possessing responsible Governments (of which Hongkong is one) to take the necessary measures to prevent bounty-fed sugar which has passed in transit through the territory of a contracting State from enjoying the benefits of the Convention in the market to which it is being sent, local legislation became necessary, and a Sub-Committee, composed of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Hon. C. W. Dickson, was therefore appointed to watch the effects of the findings of the Permanent Commission on the import and export sugar trade of Hongkong. At the Government's request various suggestions have been made during the year with the object of leading the proposed legislation in the direction best suited to the peculiar conditions of the trade in this Colony. The Colonial Secretary for the time being had been appointed as the "Fiscal Authority" in Hongkong.

JAPANESE MARKETS AND HONGKONG SUGAR.

The Consul for Japan in Hongkong having written to the *Daily Press* protesting against the imputation levelled by that paper against Japan for the discriminating treatment accorded in Japan to Hongkong sugar as compared with Japanese manufactured sugars, a letter was sent to the Consul calling attention to certain inaccuracies in his letter, and the opportunity was taken to point out that, although the discrimination alluded to in his letter may have been aimed chiefly against bounty-fed Continental sugar, it obviously applied equally to sugar from Hongkong not bounty-fed and there was wanting any evidence of a desire on the part of Japan to treat Hongkong products as Japanese products are treated in this Colony.

LICENSING OF PILOTS.

It will be remembered that a long correspondence with the Government took place in 1902 with the object of making it obligatory on the part of the pilots flying for hire within the waters of the Colony to register themselves with, and prove their qualifications before, a Board having the requisite authority from the Government to act, and although, as was pointed out, similar regulations were in force dealing with the coxswains and engineers of steam launches, the Government could not then see its way to extend the principle to pilots.

The Committee again brought the matter forward in December last and instanced the ignorant incompetence of the pilot on board the s.s. "Tijana" when she steamed over the wreck of the "Pekshan," which happened to be indifferently buoyed with danger signals. The Captain was fined for negligent seamanship by the Harbour Master, who would neither recognise the part played by the pilot nor allow him to give evidence.

The Government replied that the matter was receiving attention, and recently a Bill has been introduced by the Government dealing with the question.

BROKERAGE ON STOCKS AND SHARES.

The Committee proposed to the Stockbrokers' Association of Hongkong that brokerage should be borne by the seller only, as the present system in vogue of charging both buyer and seller with brokerage precluded the brokers from acting impartially for both parties. Unfortunately the association was unable to see the force of the argument, contending that the danger of partiality would only be accentuated by the change inasmuch as a broker might consider his duty was due more to the seller from whom he would receive his commission than to the buyer from whom he would not receive any brokerage, whereas under the present system it is the imperative duty of a broker receiving his commission from both sides to see, to the best of his ability, that both buyer and seller are treated with the greatest impartiality and in accordance with the ruling rates on the market.

SIR ERNEST SATOW'S INTERVIEW WITH THE COMMITTEE.

Following the president set on former visits of H.B.M.'s Ministers at Peking to the Colony, the Committee took the opportunity of inviting Sir Ernest Satow, G.C.M.G., H.B.M.'s Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in China, to meet them and receive an Address on the various questions awaiting settlement relating to the Colony's commercial dealings with China, amongst which were:—

- Obstructions in the Canton River.
- Piracy on the West River.
- Inland Navigation Rules.
- Abandoning Chinese Debtors.
- National Coinage for China.
- Payment of Customs Duties in Gold.
- British Commercial Treaty of Shanghai, 1902.

Proposed Increase of Taxation on Opium at Canton.

The meeting took place in the Chamber Room on the 6th August, and, after the Address had been read by the Chairman, His Excellency proceeded to discuss the subjects touched upon therein, taking them *seriatim*, asking for further

information on several points, of which he made notes, and promising to give his early attention to all on his arrival in Peking. He concluded by expressing his gratification at having been afforded the opportunity of meeting the Committee and thus being able to interchange views with them, and added an assurance of his readiness at all times to consider questions which might be brought to his notice by the Chamber.

The Committee have reason to believe that this interview will strengthen the Chamber's future relations with H.B.M.'s Foreign Office Representative in China and lead to even more ready and sympathetic acquiescence with the views from time to time laid before His Excellency.

ADDITIONAL TAX ON FOREIGN OPIUM.

—AT CANTON.

A proclamation issued by the Viceroy's authority with regard to the re-imposition of an additional tax on foreign Opium in the Two Kwang Provinces appeared in Canton in June last, and as prompt measures were necessary in order to prevent the collection of this illegal tax, a telegram was despatched to Mr. Walter Townley, H. B. M.'s Charge d'Affaires, Peking, protesting against the proposed re-introduction in modified form of the tax which was successfully opposed after negotiation extending over seven months in 1902. Full details followed by letter and support also solicited from H. E. the Governor and Mr. Consul-General Scott. Energetic steps were taken by Mr. Walter Townley and Mr. James Scott at Peking and Canton respectively, with the result that in August last the Committee had the satisfaction of learning that the exaction had once more been stopped.

OFFICIAL CODE VOCABULARY.

Since 1890 the Telegraph Companies have been striving to impose on the Mercantile Community of the World an Official Code Vocabulary, and with equal regularity this Chamber along with many others, chief of whom was the London Chamber, has strongly protested against such an arbitrary measure, which would have had the effect of forcing a higher rate of expenditure upon those who use cables by restricting the number of words and signs at their disposal and also throw upon owners of private codes great inconvenience and expense through the necessary amendment of their codes, which in many cases have been compiled at great expense and years of work.

The support of the Home Government Postal Authorities was obtained, and instead of the compulsory vocabulary, the International Conference decided to alter the rules relating to codes, and after 1st July, 1904, any combination of letters not exceeding ten in number will be passed as a code-word, provided that it is pronounceable according to the use of the language to which code-words have been limited, other combinations of letters will be counted as five letters to the word and the prohibition of letter cyphers which hitherto prevailed, is removed.

THE CURRENCY QUESTION.

The resolution passed at the Special General Meeting of Members held on 18th February, 1903, in favour of the Straits Currency Commission extending its inquiries to Hongkong with a view to ascertaining whether reform of the Colony's currency arrangements is advisable, was communicated by H. E. Sir Henry Blake to Mr. Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, who in reply referred to the resolutions passed at the conference between delegations from United States, China, Mexico, and Great Britain regarding the monetary systems of silver-using countries and the establishment of a National Currency in the Chinese Empire, Resolution No. 2 reading as follows:—

"That a national currency for the Chinese Empire, consisting of silver coins which shall be full legal tender throughout the Empire, is urgently desirable."

"As soon as practicable, steps should be taken for the establishment in China of a fixed relation between the silver unit and gold."

Mr. Chamberlain considered it would be inexpedient to appoint a Commission to inquire into the Hongkong Currency arrangements as it appeared to be out of the question to entertain the idea of adopting a gold standard of currency in the Colony while China remains a silver standard country.

The Tientsin Chamber having been informed that the Chinese Government was anxious to take action with regard to its Currency invited the Shanghai and Hongkong Chambers of Commerce to join in drawing up a Memorial to the Diplomatic Body in Peking with the object of instigating sympathetic support by that Body with the aims of the Chinese Authorities. Your Committee advised that the first step toward a solution of this complicated question should be the establishment of a uniform national currency, as provided for by Article 11 of the British Commercial Treaty of Shanghai of 1902, as until reform in this direction was carried out, it would not be possible to satisfactorily deal with the question of stability of exchange in China. The Tientsin and Shanghai Chambers agreed to this course of action, as well as to the proposed absorption, instead of the closing of the provincial Mints, and the Joint Memorial from the three bodies was despatched to each Member of the Diplomatic Body in Peking, the Doyen of whom replied that the Diplomatic Body was highly interested and greatly appreciated the efforts and zeal of the signatory Chambers of Commerce. Nothing, however, has transpired as to what efforts have since been made to further the matter with the Chinese Government, but it is no doubt too early to expect that any material result has been attained in this direction at the time of writing.

THE CROWN AGENTS AND CONTRACTS WITH PRIVATE FIRMS.

The Ceylon Chamber having asked for the opinion of this Chamber with regard to the working of the Crown Agent System in Hongkong, the Chamber's Representative, Hon. R. Shewan, put a series of questions at a subsequent meeting of the Legislative Council, and from the answers given by the Government and the

Report of the Commission appointed by H.E. the Governor in 1901 to inquire into the working of the Public Works Department, the Committee came to the conclusion that the cost to the Colony through the employing of the Crown Agents was not incommensurate with the services rendered. The advisability of all Government supplies being purchased locally was dealt with, and the view expressed that public works of "a special nature or of urgency" might be entrusted to private firms. The Ceylon Chamber's reply contained an expression of thanks for the information sent from Hongkong.

PROHIBITION OF COOLIE IMMIGRATION AT SINGAPORE.

The Committee of the Singapore Chamber wrote in June last explaining the reasons which had prompted it to support the Government in connection with the prohibition of the immigration of coolies from Hongkong on account of the prevalence of Plague in this port and inquiring whether some means of examining Chinese passengers could not be devised of so stringent a nature as would reduce to a minimum the chances of Plague cases occurring on the voyage or on arrival at Singapore. After full consideration, a reply was sent expressing the opinion that no examination would be adequate to prevent Plague occurring on the voyage, and pointing out that the profit on the trade would not permit of any further expenses being incurred by the steamship owners here. A suggestion was made that if Chinese labour is necessary to supply the labour market of the Straits Settlements, it might be of advantage to found a segregation camp on one of the numerous adjacent islands from which the transfer of the coolies into Singapore could be regulated in accordance with the requirements of that Colony and at the expense of the employers of labour there who profit by employing Chinese coolies.

There is reason to believe that the Singapore Government recognises that the only way out of the difficulty would be the adoption of some such system, as the Chamber of Commerce there recommended the extension of the existing quarantine station and segregation camp on St. John's Island.

EXPLOSIVES ON BOARD STEAMERS IN THE HARBOUR.

The Government were approached with the object of restricting the disabilities under which steamers carrying small quantities of dangerous goods are under on arrival in the Harbour. The fact of the port being free emphasized the belief that at least similar regulations might be applied as are in vogue at the Treaty Ports of China, but the Government could not see its way to go as far in this direction. Some concessions were, however, granted, the value of which depend on the promptness of the Harbour Office Officials in meeting incoming steamers, thereby preventing delay. It is hoped that before long the Government may be induced to do away with any unnecessary restrictions of this nature.

TELEGRAM DEPOSIT SYSTEM.

At the end of August last some internal arrangements in the Joint Administration of the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Co., and the Great Northern Telegraph Co., induced these Companies to cease the old system of demanding just sufficient cover from their regular customers to meet current indebtedness. The new regulations, published at two days' notice, demanded a deposit in the joint names of the two Companies at a special Bank, a sum of money equal to the average monthly account of each sender of telegrams, or if this were not agreed to, cash payments to be made for each separate message as sent. At the request of several Members of the Chamber, a strong protest was made against so high-handed a proceeding. A long correspondence ensued, in which it was pointed out amongst other arguments that:—

- (1) Longer notice should have been given.
- (2) The injustice of a person desiring to do business with only one of the two Companies being obliged to deposit his money with both jointly.
- (3) That to make the amount deposited equal to an average month's telegram account was tantamount to making each depositor a creditor of the Companies for the greater portion of each month, which was more than the joint Administration were entitled to, and that a reduction of the deposit by one half would be a more equitable proceeding.
- (4) That the claim by the Companies to the whole of the interest allowed by the Bank on the deposits was unjust and contrary to custom, and the argument for the retention of the interest by the Telegraph Companies as put forward by them on the ground of the credit allowed and trouble of bookkeeping was considered by the Chamber to be unreasonable.
- (5) That if all senders of telegrams elected to pay cash for each telegram sent, much expense, delay and consequent annoyance to the whole Mercantile Community would result, as the handling of cash in small amounts is not a quick process, especially in this Colony.

In the end the Cable Companies agreed to refund half of the sums deposited with them and to allow the whole of the interest on the remaining portion to the depositor. A return to the old system would have been preferred, but as the Companies find themselves unable to accede to this plan, your Committee are of opinion that the system now adopted is not without its advantages.

MEDICAL INSPECTION OF PASSENGERS.

In 1897 and again in 1901 the Chamber brought to the notice of Government the desirability of the appointment of the Health Officer of the Port being filled by an Official whose undivided attention would be devoted to the duties of the position, and as a result of the representations then placed before His Excellency the Governor, Sir Henry Blake made the following recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—

(a) The appointment of a Second Health Officer of the Port who will be allowed no practice of any kind.

(b) That in view of Dr. Jordan's long service as Health Officer of the Port, His Excellency recommended that he should be allowed to retain his private practice on shore, but only on the distinct understanding that when himself engaged in private practice he will always place at the disposal of this Government another Officer as his substitute to discharge the duties of Health Officer of the Port, and who will not take private practice on board ships.

(c) His Excellency further recommended that if Dr. Jordan was not willing to accept these conditions, another Health Officer of the Port should be appointed in his place on the same terms as those offered to the Second Health Officer of the Port.

The committee at that time expressed the opinion that the above recommendations, if carried into effect, would, they hoped, put an end to the delays in the inspection of vessels that had occurred in the past, and therefore agreed to His Excellency's suggestions.

This hope unfortunately was not fulfilled, and the Chamber found it necessary to again draw the attention of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government to the inconvenience and loss suffered by the large shipping interests of this colony through the new arrangement not having produced the anticipated result, as in consequence of the Health Officer of the port and his deputy being engaged with their private practice in various parts of the city, it not infrequently happens that when their official services are required they are inaccessible. Dr. Koyt is thus often the only officer available to attend the ships coming into the harbour, with the result that delays are of frequent occurrence.

His Excellency has, however, not seen his way to follow the committee's suggestion to employ a Government Official without private practice but with a qualified assistant, and the committee regret having to record this decision as they feel their suggestion is the only remedy for the delays now experienced.

JUNKS FLYING FOREIGN FLAGS TO EVADE PAYMENT OF "CHING-FEI" TAX LEVIED BY THE VICEROY OF THE TWO-KWANG.

Following up the representations made last year, the Committee again drew the attention of the Government to the fact that a large number of trading junks using the Harbour as native craft after leaving the waters of the Colony hoist certain foreign flags under Consular Authority and proceed to Canton as foreign craft. Mr. James Scott, H.M.'s Consul-General at Canton, referred to the matter in his Annual Report for 1902 as a state of affairs which is obviously unsatisfactory both as regards the Hongkong Government and the Imperial Maritime Customs in China. Certain suggestions were therefore made which, it is hoped, will be acted upon, so that the Harbour Master may be kept informed as to the names and registered numbers of such junks to enable him to refuse them the right of entry and clearance in the Colony. The improper use of alien flags by Chinese junks will then be discouraged.

STORM WARNINGS.

The exertions of the Committee in 1902 were rewarded by H. E. the Governor agreeing in May last to introduce the flag system of weather signals as worked at Shanghai for the information of Shipmasters, but without displacing the cone system in use. His Excellency's opinion and that of his expert advisers was stated as being that the cone system was a better and safer system and familiar to the local junk population. It will be remembered that at the commencement of the discussion the Chamber suggested the introduction of a flag system, but His Excellency then arrived at the conclusion that an alteration in the Hongkong system of signalling of ships was not desirable and that a system of flag signals to convey weather information was, for the reasons indicated by the Acting Director, not suited to local conditions. Eventually the Chamber drew an extended code of symbol signals for day and lantern signals for night work, to meet the objections raised against flags as well as on economical grounds. Now that the Government has introduced the Shanghai flag system it is felt that at least a fair trial may be given to objections raised later if found necessary.

The Committee's suggestion that an additional signal station should be established at Cape Collinson and Green Island was vetoed on the ground that these places were not in direct telephonic communication with, and the signals could not be verified by, the Observatory Officials.

A concession was granted whereby all Masters of Vessels or their Agents may now obtain free special telegraphic information from the Observatory by calling at the Telegraph Company's Office in the Praya or through the telephone on calling at the Police Station at Kowloon Point, and this will doubtless prove of advantage to Masters of Vessels on the point of sailing.

The Acting Director (Mr. Figg) reported that the Observatory was well equipped with Meteorological instruments.

REDUCED CABLE RATES TO EUROPE.

The hope expressed in last year's Report that the repeated representations to the Cable Companies on the subject of the excessive rates charged might not be without effect at the International Telegraph Conference in May, 1903, fortunately turned out to be correct, as from the 15th July, 1903, the rate to Europe was dropped from France 7 to 5.50, a reduction of over 20 per cent. The competition of the new Pacific Cable to Manila has been the direct cause of the lower rates for which the Committee have been agitating for years past.

CONVEYANCE OF AUSTRALIAN MAILS VIA HONGKONG AND THE SIBERIAN RAILWAY.

The Council of the North Australian League forwarded resolutions in favour of the quicker transit of London Mails to Australia and the desirability of inaugurating as soon as the Adelaide-Port Darwin Railway line is completed of a mail service via the Trans-Siberian Railway to China and thence via Hongkong or Canton by first steamer service to Port Darwin.

ELECTION OF A REPRESENTATIVE TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

H. E. Sir Henry Blake informed the Chamber that he had granted a year's leave of absence to the Hon. R. Shewan as from the 5th August last and therefore requested the nomination of a temporary Member of Council in his place. A special General Meeting of the Members was held on the 12th idem, at which Mr. H. E. Pollock, K. C., was elected by 63 votes to 54 for Mr. E. A. Howett, His Excellency afterwards signified his approval of the nomination.

INDECIBLE PEISONS INTRODUCTION ORDINANCE 1904.

This bill, which became law on 23rd February, 1904, was introduced in the Legislative Council last August under the name of "Indecible Immigration Ordinance." Its conditions were so onerous that the Chamber strongly opposed each stage in Council through the Acting Representative of the Chamber, Mr. H. E. Pollock, K.C., and the Government were induced to somewhat restrict the proposed liabilities under which Owners, Charterers, Agents, Consignees and Masters of vessels were to be subjected to for landing persons in the Colony who afterwards became lunatic, etc., and a charge on the rates within 6 months of such landing. The period of 6 months was finally reduced to three months, the aggregate expense limited to \$5,000, exemption permitted if it could be proved that such person became lunatic, etc., after embarkation at the port or place from which he shipped and the right given to demand from the Authorities a certificate of refusal of permission to land.

With these concessions the Committee had to be content, but they regard with some concern the recurrent desire of the Government to saddle the shipping interest with expenses which threaten to deprive Hongkong of its advantage as a cheap transshipping port. Your Committee have had in mind throughout their deliberations on this Ordinance that the retention of freedom from direct taxation and the repression of useless restrictions is the policy which the shipping passing through the harbour should be treated if its present volume is to be maintained or increased.

The shipping Firms and Agencies supported the action of the Committee by addressing a petition to His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government in which very strong arguments were brought forward for the withdrawal of the Bill, but unfortunately His Excellency refused to comply with the wishes of the Petitioners.

MEMBERS.

The present membership is 144, showing an increase of 8 Firms and Public Companies and 3 private individuals, who now number 117 and 27 respectively.

Messrs. Deacon and Hastings and Edwards, Pirry & Co., Ltd., have resigned their membership, and the Holland-China Trading Co. took over the membership of Messrs. Hotz & Jacob & Co.

The following have been admitted to membership subject to confirmation at the Annual Meeting:—

Messrs. Goddard and Douglas, Barretto and Co., Lamke and Rogge, E. C. Wilks and Co., Chun On Fire Insurance Co., Ltd., Shiu On S. S. Co., Ltd., Osaka Shosen Kaisha, Japan-China Japan Line, China and Japan Telephone and Electric Co., Ltd., Deacon, Looker and Deacon, Mr. E. H. Sharp, K. C., Mr. G. C. Moron, and Mr. A. M. Embury.

THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

Since its election at the last Annual Meeting in May last, the only changes taking place have been the temporary substitution of Mr. H. E. Pollock, K. C., for Mr. R. Shewan as *ex-officio* Member in August last, and Mr. C. Michela having left the Colony in January, 1904, Mr. A. Haupt was invited to re-join the Committee.

DEUTER'S POLITICAL TELEGRAMS.

Since the last Meeting the Committee have made a contract with the Deuter's Telegram Co., Ltd., for five years at a monthly subscription of \$500.

PROPOSED DIRECT PARCEL POST EXCHANGE BETWEEN HONGKONG AND UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The Committee have pleasure in reporting that the joint representations of the Chamber, and that of Amoy to the Hongkong Government which were strongly supported by H.E. Sir Henry Blake, and referred to in last year's report, have had a satisfactory issue.

Parcels may now be sent direct from Hongkong by post to places in the United States, and there is little doubt that this service will rapidly prove a great convenience and incentive to trade.

ARBITRATIONS.

During the year 8 differences between buyer and seller were referred to the Chamber by Members, and the expert survey reports made on the goods in dispute were in all cases accepted by the applicants.

As one of the objects of the Chamber is to encourage reference to arbitration in trade disputes instead of by redress in the Law Courts, the Committee consider it satisfactory to place on record the increased inclination on the part of manufacturers and merchants in Europe to require surveys to be conducted under the auspices of the Chambers of Commerce.

FINANCES.

The Finance Rock Fund amounts with interest to \$4,256.84 and is separately invested, partly in Hongkong Hotel Co. 6 per cent. Debentures purchased on 31st December last at par, and the balance in 44 per cent. Hongkong and Shanghai Bank Fixed Deposit. No demands have been made on the Fund during the year for discovery of rocks dangerous to navigation.

The income shows a satisfactory increase over that of the previous year, chiefly resulting through the increased annual rent, but on the other hand the expenditure has been greater. The surplus is \$384.27, bringing the Reserve Fund up to \$12,847.23 at the end of the year.

It will be noted that in order to obtain a larger income in future years, the Bank Deposits on general account have been withdrawn and re-invested on 31st December last in Hongkong Hotel Co., and Hongkong & Kowloon Wharf & Godown Co. 6 per cent. Debentures bearing interest at 6 per cent. and 5 per cent. per annum respectively.

HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S SHIPS IN THE CHINA SQUADRON.

Aberdeen, dispatch-boat, 1,700 tons, 10 guns, 3,000 h.p., Comdr. O. D. De La Roche, Hongkong. Albion, battleship, 12,950 tons, 16 guns, Capt. Freyhauf, Hongkong. Albatross, dispatch-boat, 1,700 tons, 10 guns, 3,000 h.p., Comdr. O. D. De La Roche, Hongkong. Amphitrite, 1st class cruiser, 11,000 tons, 18,000 h.p., Capt. Charles Windham, C.V.O., Hongkong. Bramble, gunboat, 710 tons, 6 guns, 1,300 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. C. O. M. Makins, Yangtze. Britomart, gunboat, 710 tons, 6 guns, 1,300 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. Thos. D. Pratt, Yangtze. Centurion, battleship, 10,500 tons, Capt. Fegan, Hongkong. Cressy, cruiser, 12,000 tons, 14 guns, 21,000 h.p., Capt. Henry M. T. Tabor, Mrs. Bay. Eclipse, cruiser, 5,800 tons, 11 guns, Captain Stokes, en route W. India. Espiegle, gunboat, 1,070 tons, 10 guns, Comdr. Ernest G. Barton, Yangtze. Famo, torpedo-boat-destroyer, 360 tons, 6 guns, 5,700 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. C. Aszot, Hongkong. Fearless, gunboat, 443 tons, 12 guns, Comdr. Vaughan Lewis, Chumalpo. Glory, battleship, 12,950 tons, 16 guns, 13,500 h.p., Capt. A. V. Carter, Hongkong. Hardy, torpedo-boat-destroyer, 260 tons, 6 guns, 4,000 h.p., in reserve. Hart, torpedo-boat-destroyer, 260 tons, 6 guns, 4,000 h.p., in reserve. Hamble, storeship, 1,643 tons, Comdr. John D. Daintree, Hongkong. Janus, torpedo-boat-destroyer, 230 tons, 6 guns, 3,900 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. J. A. Gregory, Kinsla, river gunboat, 311 tons, Lieut.-Comdr. Christopher P. Metcalf, on Yangtze. Gleaner, river gunboat, 14,100 tons, Capt. Hon. W. G. Stupford, Weihsien. Moorhen, river gunboat, 130 tons, 2 guns, Lieut.-Comdr. G. G. Webster, Hongkong. Ocean, battleship, 12,950 tons, 16 guns, 13,500 h.p., Captain R. F. O. Foe, U.M.C., Hongkong. Otter, torpedo-boat-destroyer, 350 tons, in reserve. Phoenix, ship, 1,015 tons, 6 guns, 1,400 h.p., Comdr. J. Nicholas, Shanghai. Rambler, surveying-ship, 553 tons, Comdr. Chas. E. Moore, Hongkong. Rinaldo, ship, 980 tons, 6 guns, Comdr. D. St. Aubyn Wicks, en route Singapore. Robin, river gunboat, 85 tons, 2 guns, 240 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. Vaughan, West River. Rosario, ship, 930 tons, 6 guns, 11,470 h.p., Comdr. Thos. Jackson, Yangtze. Sandpiper, river gunboat, 85 tons, 2 guns, 240 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. L. W. Jones, West River. Sirius, 2nd class cruiser, 3,800 tons, Capt. C. H. H. Moore, Hongkong. Snipe, river gunboat, 85 tons, 2 guns, 240 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. Ernest W. G. Davidson on Yangtze. Sparrowhawk, torpedo-boat-destroyer, 360 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. O. C. Bingham, Hongkong. Taku, torpedo-boat-destroyer, 250 tons, 8 guns, 5,800 h.p., in reserve. Talbot, cruiser, 5,500 tons, 11 guns, 9,600 h.p., Capt. Louis Bayley, Singapore. Tamar, receiving ship, 4,000 tons, 6 guns, Comdr. C. G. Dickson, at Hongkong. Teal, river gunboat, 180 tons, 2 guns, Lieut.-Comdr. E. F. R. Daguerre, on Yangtze. Thetis, cruiser, 3,400 tons, Capt. J. C. A. Wilkinson, Shanghai. Tweed, gunboat, 392 tons, 3 guns, 230 h.p., on Yangtze. Vanguard, battleship, 12,950 tons, 16 guns, 13,500 h.p., Capt. L. C. Stuart, C.M.G., Mrs. Bay. Vestal, ship, 980 tons, 10 guns, 1,400 h.p., Comdr. Stuart St. J. Farquhar, Singapore. Virago, torpedo-boat-destroyer, 360 tons, in reserve. Waterwitch, surveying ship, 620 tons, 450 h.p., Comdr. E. C. Hardy, Double Haven. Whiting, torpedo-boat-destroyer, 360 tons, 6 guns, 5,900 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. Wells, Hongkong. Wiven, coast defence ship, armoured, 2,750 tons, 1,000 h.p., in reserve, at Hongkong. Woodcock, gunboat, 150 tons, 2 guns, 550 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. Hugh Somerville, Yangtze. Woodruff, gunboat, 150 tons, 2 guns, 550 h.p., Lieut.-Comdr. Wason, Yangtze.

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